

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating the presence of allowable subject matter in claims 3-13. Applicants also thank the Examiner and her supervisor for the courtesy extended to applicants' representative during a personal interview conducted on January 25, 2007.

In the final Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Sullivan U.S. Patent No. 5,494,043 in view of Chesney U.S. Patent No. 6,544,188. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to the claims, as amended.

During the interview, applicants' representative proposed amending claim 1 to recite that the fixing stand includes a tensioning part for automatically pulling the other end of the first band portion with a predetermined force and noted that Chesney discloses no such automatic tensioning feature. Both the Examiner and her supervisor agreed that such an amendment would overcome the applied prior art, but would also require an updated search.

Consequently, applicants have amended claim 1 as discussed above to differentiate more clearly the claimed invention from the cited references. No new matter has been added. Thus, the rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn, as well as the rejection of claim 2, which depends from claim 1.


In view of the above, each of the claims in this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicants solicit early action in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing Docket No. 163852020400.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 29, 2007

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